GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Double Trouble

A VFP pilot in an RF-8A was launched from a carrier off the East Coast for what was to be a routine photo recon hop. After approximately one hour of flight time, the pilot noted his utility hydraulic system warning light had come on. The ship was informed of the hydraulic system failure and the pilot was instructed to divert to a naval air station.

The pilot had things all planned for an uneventful arrested landing. In all probability this would have been the case but, after blowing the gear down, he found he could not unlock the wing-incidence lock. After all possible means to get the wing up were exhausted, the pilot discussed the situation with a qualified LSO. The decision was reached to make a wing-down approach into the mid-field arresting gear. While the F-8 orbited the field to burn down, an SAR pilot in a CH-19E was launched to cover the emergency.

The pilot flew a good LSO-monitored approach, touching down approximately 500 feet from the mid-field arresting gear. Touchdown speed was not too excessive for the wing-down configuration of the aircraft but was

beyond the design specification of the arresting gear. When engagement with the arresting cable was made, the cable parted and the aircraft-arresting hook failed. The aircraft vibrated as if a tire had blown and the pilot immediately added power in an effort to become airborne. After several doubtful moments, he got the F-8 back into the air.

Realizing the aircraft was damaged during the attempted arrestment, another F-8 pilot operating in the local area was asked to join on the crippled *Crusader* and inspect the extent of damage. Visual inspection revealed that the arresting gear cable had whiplashed the aircraft landing gear, causing extensive damage. In addition, the tail hook had been torn away.

With the aircraft in this condition, it was determined that another landing attempt would not be made. The pilot was instructed to proceed to a predetermined area for a controlled ejection. The helicopter pilot positioned his aircraft so he could observe the ejection and pick up the pilot as soon as he landed.

At an altitude of 7000 feet over an unpopulated area with the aircraft headed toward the sea, the pilot completed his ejection check list, shut down the engine and pulled the curtain. All ejection equipment operated normally and the SAR helicopter was on the scene almost as soon as the pilot's feet touched the ground. The uninjured *Crusader* pilot boarded the helicopter for what he thought would be an uneventful nine-mile ride to the air station.

The helicopter took off with the rescued pilot and climbed to an altitude of 250 feet for the flight back. Approximately 20 minutes later, the NAS Operations duty officer received a telephone call from the SAR pilot that he had crash-landed in a wooded area approximately three miles from the station due to engine failure. He also stated that he, his crewmen and the F-8 pilot were all in good condition. All four were returned to the air station via land transportation.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great horned toadies and sufferin' catfish! To be in two accidents in a matter of minutes when you had absolutely nothin' to do with either of them is carryin' things too far.

This helo pilot probably had a pretty red face but he handled his emergency the best way possible when he was

ILLUSTRATED BY Osborn

confronted with carburetor problems.

It's not too difficult to see that material failure was involved in these accidents, and you can bet your boots that the Safety Center boys are on top of them. But I'd sure like to hear the F-8 driver tell the story at Happy Hour. "There I was . . . !"

Bent Bird

An instrument instructor (senior type) with his lieutenant student departed an East Coast air station in a T-33 for what was scheduled as a local instrument training flight.

The initial portion of the flight was, in the words of the pilot, routine in all respects for approximately one hour and 20 minutes. At about this time, while still some 20 minutes north of home station, the pilot asked his dual pilot if he would like to do some aerobatics but he declined, stating that he was not familiar with the airspeeds and aircraft limitations.

The instructor then asked the dual pilot if he objected to his doing a couple of rolls. As there was no objection from the junior pilot in the rear seat, the pilot turned east to clear the airways and picked up about 350 knots at an altitude of 12,000 feet. The pilot pulled the nose above the horizon and entered a roll to the left, but about half way through the roll he became completely disoriented and the nose fell through.

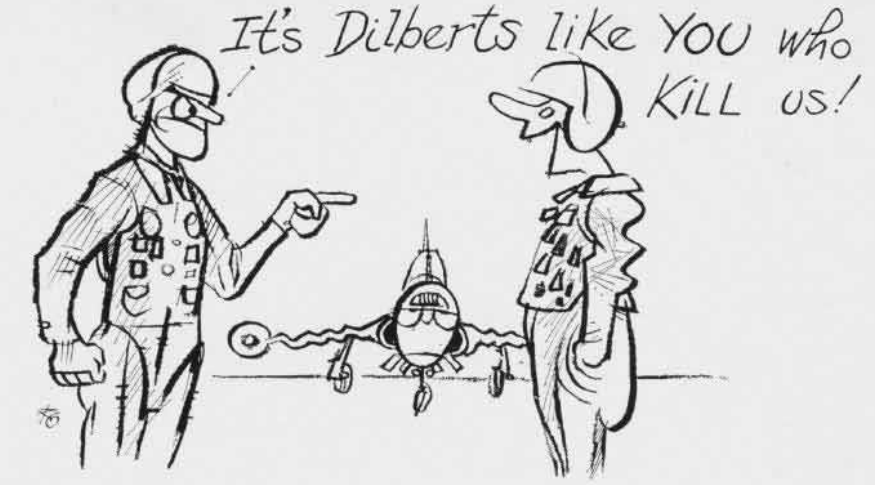
After checking instruments, he became rudely aware that the aircraft was in an extreme nose-down attitude with airspeed building fast. He immediately chopped the power and attempted to pull the nose through, but when excessive "G" force was applied naturally, the aircraft began to shudder. Stick pressure was relaxed and a gentle recovery accomplished at an altitude between 2000 and 3000 feet.

The dual pilot was unable to recall if the attempted roll was to the right or left as he became disoriented when this episode began and blacked out completely during the recovery. After regaining consciouness, he had a good case of vertigo. It took several seconds before he was aware the aircraft was in a climbing turn and several minutes before he was fully aware of what had happened.

The pilot was disoriented during the entire "maneuver" and although he didn't black out himself during recovery, he did find it difficult to hold his head up. After taking a quick inventory, the pilot climbed the tired little aircraft to 6000 feet and headed toward home.

While the dual pilot was looking around trying to get his bearings, he discovered the port aileron to be badly wrinkled and immediately notified the pilot. He also informed him that he had a severe pain in his neck and back and asked how many "G's" they pulled during recovery. The pilot reported that his accelerometer showed 5.5 positive "G's" and, after checking, the dual pilot reported the rear cockpit accelerometer showed 10 "G's".

Aware that the aircraft had been structurally damaged during the flight, the pilot requested a straight-in approach to the runway and the landing was accomplished without further incident. After landing the aircraft was inspected; the airframe was damaged to such an extent that it was classified as a strike.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! This wasn't a close shave, it was a narrow escape. With a "G" or two more, the little bird would most likely have shed a wing and these guys would have been helpless in their semi-conscious state. Even if these T-33's are tired old dogs, that's no reason to whip 'em this way.

There's certainly no mystery as to why the dual pilot blacked out. His G-suit hadn't been refitted since wearin' it over heavy winter gear. It's plain to see that a loose fitting G-suit is of little or no value to anyone.

Now there's nothin' wrong with aerobatics, provided the hop is briefed so everyone knows what's going on. This flight was scheduled as instrument training for the lad in the rear cockpit, but he didn't even touch the controls during the flight. What he learned about instruments on this hop could be put in that well known thimble. Although he was exposed to a rather unusual maneuver, he really didn't learn a lot about aerobatics either.

Memo from Gramps

BEWARE OF PROPELLERS—JET BLAST—INTAKE DUCTS. We can find these words in large red letters—in hangars, on ramps, operations buildings and towers, hangar decks and flight decks, on posters, in directives, instructions, and lectures, but we still have people who ignore or just don't observe these warnings. All too often I read of a lad who backed, walked, or was blown into a prop, was sucked into an intake duct or blown across a ramp or flight deck. Words, such as "The mishap was caused by failure of the victim to observe safety precautions" or "It is the opinion of the board that the primary cause of this accident was non-compliance with established maintenance safety precautions," are beginning to cause your ol' Gramps sleepless nights.

Granted, there are certain hazards connected with aircraft operations, but safe, efficient operations can be conducted if basic safety precautions are enforced. Yes, *enforced*—there probably isn't a supervisor in Naval Aviation who hasn't seen someone violate safety rules and done nothing about it. We are all guilty to some extent. I am still convinced—after lo! these scores of years—that proper supervision and training will eliminate many of these costly and needless accidents.